

# The LENINIST

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## Fight European capitalism Unite European workers

The Maastricht summit brings nearer European Community monetary and political union. Unless we want to leave ourselves open to the most vicious exploitation, the workers' movement must unite its forces on a European scale

**A**S IF it did not have enough problems with the council tax, the NHS, a stagnant economy and spiralling unemployment, the question of Europe has returned to haunt our bosses' preferred party of government. With only months to go before a general election, John Major is undoubtedly worried that December's Maastricht European Community summit will again open up deep fissures in his already badly disorientated party.

As well as dogged "can't pay, won't pay" rebellion from below against the hated poll tax, the "flagship" of the Tory Party's third term, it was divisions within the Tories' own ranks over Europe that brought down Thatcher ... Yet, despite having been dispatched with the Brutus knife, Thatcher is unlikely to get a revenge worthy of Julius Caesar.

The Thatcherite old guard are opposed to a single currency and moves towards political union (federalism) on principle, and are demanding the promise of a referendum before the summit. They will not get it; indeed if Major gets his way they are destined for burial through praise (ie, in bourgeois political terms, elevation to the House of Lords).

Nevertheless, although Major is more pro-Europe - or at least wants to be seen as being less obdurate - than his predecessor in No10, the fact of the matter is that Britain remains the most reluctant of the 12 EC members when it comes to European unity. Hence the biggest danger Major faces is not Thatcher and Co bringing down the government in a last, defiant act of 'conviction' politics, rather defeat at the hands of Labour's cynical image makers. Isolation for Major at Maastricht would give Kinnock's Labour Party the perfect cudgel with which to beat the Tories in the coming general election.

Labour's leadership wants to take advantage of the sincere, if deflected, internationalism which leads the majority of population in Britain, especially the youth, to favour the EC; mistakenly, the masses believe the EC marks a new peaceful chapter in what has until now been the bloody history of inter-European relations.

Naturally Labour wants people to forget about its 1983 election manifesto pledge to get out of the EC. Now it wraps its pale pink programme of running capitalism better than the Tories in the blue and gold colours of the EC; its National Executive Committee has just voted overwhelmingly for a policy document designed to give them the edge over Major when it comes to Europe. Thus on a whole range of issues - working hours, the environment, education and training - Labour now offers Europe as our salvation.

But there is more, far more, to Europe than the petty machinations of Labour and Tory career politicians. Fundamentally we can locate two separate, but closely interlinked factors that are bringing the countries of Western Europe together into something that, in all likelihood, will be of a qualitatively different order from a Nato or Efta military/trading alliance. What developments point to in fact is a United States of Europe.

1. The first, and most important, factor is the continuing revolutionisation of the means of production - epitomised by the year by year quantum leaps in micro-electronics. This finds a fetter in the existence of national boundaries, a fetter that, one way or another, has to be removed. Nation states were the cutting edge of humanity in the nineteenth century; in the twilight of the twentieth century they have become reactionary.

Now capitalism needs to do more than produce on a national scale and trade on an international scale. Now it must exploit and produce on an international scale too. This involves more than importing raw materials, we are talking about something far higher. In our day *characteristically* the concentration and centralisation of capital takes place between *advanced* countries, no longer simply within them (this is the significance of one such country after another abandoning nationalisation for privatisation - it had nothing to do with promoting *free* competition, rather it opened the road to *monopolistic* competition on an international scale).

2. The tremendous integration and development of the world economy described above might undermine the nation state. Needless to say, because it still takes place on the terrain of a capitalism which has already in this century caused two horrendously devastating world wars, it takes an irrational and highly dangerous form.

With the collapse of the socialist bloc, the antagonisms of capitalism have moved to the fore of world politics. US orchestrated imperialist unity against the Soviet Union is slowly giving way to divisions between the imperialist powers themselves. Taken alone, the countries of Western Europe have no chance of competing with the mighty US or the rising power of Japan. Together, though, it is another matter.

Without integration Europe will fall further and further behind in one area of high tech production after another, until it is reduced to an assembly point, a consumer, a quaint, picturesque industrial wasteland. However, even leaving aside the imminent entry of rich applicants Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, the existing 12 EC powers have the possibility, if they unite, of instant super-

power status - one reason that makes EC *political* integration so attractive for frustrated would-be world statesmen in small countries like Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.

An EC fused economically and politically would, with one bound, overtake the US, leave Japan in the shade and have Europeans again arrogantly strutting around the world stage. It is fear of this shift in the centre of world power *back to Europe* that has driven the US towards the creation of its own North American Free Trade Area by constituting Canada and Mexico as integral components of its home market. Japan too is set on a new Co-prosperity Sphere and is doing its utmost to offset a post-1992 fortress Europe by pumping unprecedented amounts of capital into the countries of the EC, above all Britain.

So why is Britain the most reluctant European? It has nothing to do with fear of imperialism producing another (this time final?) world war. Britain was historically a *world* power, not a European one. As the leading industrial and then financial power, it played off one European country against another, and not only ruled the waves but robbed the world.

Of course, as they do, things have changed. Three quarters of a century of uneven development saw Britain finally replaced at the top of the imperialist table by the US in the aftermath of World War II. Nevertheless Britain continued as a leading imperialist power, and one which, because of the easy, undemanding conditions of the post-World War II long boom, a common language and culture, and many shared objectives with the US, was able to play Greece to the new Rome.

This *special relationship* with US superimperialism might be vastly overrated today by the hardline Thatcherites, but it and Britain's continued, if second rate, role as a world power produced a general schizophrenic attitude towards Europe across the spectrum of British bourgeois politics. In the midst of its continued and irreversible decline, Britain's rulers reluctantly have to look towards Europe as their future, but this does not stop them - or the reformist and 'official communist' left - trying to hold on to past glories.

Under these conditions, what attitude should communists take towards European integration?

To begin with, we can only regard with contempt the Little England nationalism shared by both the Labour left *a la* Benn and Skinner, and the 'official communists' of the Communist Party of Britain and New Communist Party variety (the latter organisation actually urges a boycott of EC

elections on the ground that the EC is "undemocratic", while automatically calling for a Labour vote in elections to Westminster. Real communists use the bourgeois parliament as a platform to expose the capitalist system - democracy has nothing to do with it). These opportunists view the development of the productive forces with horror. Like true philistines they want to turn things back to the past in order to facilitate their purely British road to socialism and their dreams of a Labour parliamentary majority using the bourgeois state, naturally with its *sovereignty* restored, to facilitate it.

A withdrawal from the EC by British capitalism under present day conditions would be an act of economic suicide; it is thus, in the form presented by the Labour left and what remains of 'official communism', thoroughly reactionary as well as completely unrealisable. That does not mean we should jump on the EC bandwagon, as have the Labour leadership and what will in all likelihood call itself the Democratic Left later this month.

We communists oppose the bourgeoisie however it is grouped. That means we communists in Britain do not take a pro or anti position on what exact course the United Kingdom government takes as regards European integration. Broader and far more exciting perspectives exercise our minds.

The conscious working class must support everything which helps bring together the nationalities of the world, everything which undermines national distinctions. The EC, as a product of the decadent bourgeoisie, is a highly contradictory affair when it comes to this.

It brings together the nationalities of Europe, undermines national distinctions within Europe. But as an imperialist bloc it is designed to oppress, rob and exploit the working class, not only within Europe but across the world. It is also designed to create a barrier between the workers of Europe and the world and prepare Europe for economic and if necessary military war with the opposing imperialist blocs.

Our *proletarian internationalist* task within Europe, therefore, is to organise the revolutionary overthrow of the EC, just as within Britain it is to organise the revolutionary overthrow of the United Kingdom state. This would be our greatest contribution towards bringing the workers of the world together and preparing the conditions for the self liberation of our class.

Where to begin? Every encouragement and help must be given to elementary working class and trade union organisation across Europe. Conditions demand it.

Already we face bosses who pro-

duce on a Europe wide basis and enact European legislation through an EC parliament and council of ministers. Against the European boss class we must form European trade unions and trade union combines. The Euro boss must not be allowed to set worker against worker. Besides organising joint industrial action we must demand European minimum wages, hours, benefits and basic conditions - not set at the lowest common denominator but at what is culturally necessary in the most developed of European countries. We say a 35 hour week across Europe and a £250 minimum wage/unemployment benefit.

Such measures and demands can only be a first step. The working class needs more than reforms; the development of the productive forces beyond the nation state cries out for a world government, something only possible with socialism (the first stage of communism).

Everything we know about the embryonic European capitalist state and the development of capitalism in general tells us it will be impossible to arrive at socialism through the efforts of one country alone. Either the revolution spreads or it dies.

Economic and political union of the boss class will mean that an isolated revolution even in a Britain, France, Italy or Germany, let alone a Luxembourg, Holland or Belgium, could never survive. In all probability anyway a revolutionary situation and a revolution in one country will be connected with Europe as a whole; the political and economic union of Europe will see to that.

So a victorious proletariat in one country in Europe can have no thoughts of national socialism, it must go to the aid of the Europe wide revolution. It is either that or Europe wide counterrevolution. Obviously, what this perspective brings onto the agenda is the necessity of revolutionary organisation to coordinate and lead.

We communists too must organise across Europe, as an integral part of our struggle to reforge our Communist Party of Great Britain and Communist International. To the extent that the common market leads to political union and some sort of federal European imperialist state, our organisation must go from the close cooperation of fraternal parties to the fusion of those parties into a single multi-national party. The struggle of the working class demands such a development, and one way or another the working class always finds its answer.

Jack Conrad





Central Organ of the  
Provisional Central Committee of the  
Communist Party of Great Britain

THE TORIES have made a great hooah about Opportunity 2000 and their commitment to the rights of women. Naturally the reformist left lost no time in bemoaning "Major's lost opportunity", as if he could really deliver equality for women as opposed to a tiny bourgeois elite (*Morning Star*, October 29 1991).

Opportunity 2000 is classic gesture politics and does not even pretend to offer anything to the mass of working women, around 40% of whom are officially classified as low paid. It is an inexpensive public relations exercise, worthy of Major's blessing. Designed by some of Britain's biggest monopolies, it is intended to win the loyalty of customers and female lower and middle management, through being seen as being on the side of women - which, of course, as ruthless exploiters and robbers, they are not.

Communists have always argued that women's liberation is inextricably tied up with the class struggle, specifically the destruction of capitalism and its replacement by a society based on production for need. Only then can women really be free and relations between men and women truly develop on the basis of genuine equality.

This has nothing to do with 'putting off' the liberation of women. No, it is the first condition for developing a programme of action that is not doomed to go up the blind alley of imagining that capitalism will deliver women's freedom. Capitalism can only survive on the basis of sustaining and constantly refashioning the oppression of women. Women provide children - future workers - free of charge to the capitalist system. They also constitute a large percentage of the reserve army of labour. Very many women are thus drawn in and thrown out of work according to the vagaries of the economy, and consigned to viciously low paid and unprotected part time and temporary jobs. So capitalism is not the solution for women. It is the problem.

That this is the case is easily shown; all we need do is demand what women need and what is technically perfectly realisable in an advanced country which stands on the threshold of the 21st century: free abortion and contraception on demand, free and good quality 24 hour nurseries, the socialisation of housework. That capitalism cannot and will not deliver such elementary provisions, which would enable the mass of women to lead something approaching a full life, means it should go ... and it will go, through the united revolutionary action of working class men and women.

Unable to fight for what women need, the feminist movement collapsed organisationally long ago and is for the moment of no real social significance. However, as an ideology, it lives, but not only in the rarefied atmosphere of academia and in the surviving publications of the radical intelligentsia. It has been taken over by the bourgeoisie.

Feminism has gone from being the cause of bourgeois sniggering to an important weapon in the armoury of our rulers. It is not in the least surprising or strange, then, that the hard right and deeply bigoted *Evening Standard* greeted Opportunity 2000 with an enthusiastic "Major the feminist" headline.

Using its own brand of feminism, the ruling class is doing its best to turn women's oppression from a social question into an individual question, at the heart of which are male attitudes. Thus, in the name of championing the rights of single mothers, the government sets in place an Orwellian dragnet designed to catch biological fathers not paying maintenance. It does not matter that many of these men live in poverty; like a modern day Malthusian priest the government insists that 'irresponsible' fathers, not the system, cause overcrowding, juvenile delinquency and almost every other problem. Having had their 'fun', these men, not the state, are expected to pay for the 'consequences'.

There are many other examples of bourgeois state feminism, but none so sickening as the moves triggered by the recent Judge Thomas hearings in the US. The often endemic and humiliating problem of sexual harassment is a classic example of the alienated inter-personal relations caused by capitalism itself. Nonetheless, around it the bourgeoisie wants to organise yet another moral crusade, a crusade designed to shift society even further to the right and increase the powers of management and the state.

Beginning with a seemingly innocuous "statement of principle condemning all harassment", what is being aimed at is clear: management and then state "investigation" and "discipline" (*Financial Times*, October 23 1991). As a partisan of bourgeois state feminism, Sally Brampton, former editor of *Elle*, urges on the government: "let freedom be repressed, let radical feminism be empowered, let McCarthyism enter the sexual arena" (*The Guardian*, October 15 1991) ... If anyone needed further proof that we are in a period of reaction, here it is.

**The Editor**

## LETTERS Party

In reference to the way that your leaflet "CPGB Press Conference, Communism Lives!" has been worded: paragraph 4 "The real communists in Britain - comrades organised by the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB...". The implication is that outside of your members, there are no real communists. True, you give the appeal in your final paragraph, but the suggestion is implicit that all such organisations, individuals and groups can eventually only show themselves as real communists by becoming members of your self proclaimed reborn CPGB.

You must find some ways to have genuine consultation with others to agree a conference to decide the correct way to reconstitute the CPGB. What I am saying basically is that the present raw material is considerably more than the CPGB Provisional Central Committee and members, and a new forging together is needed. Having said all that, I'm sure that in an eventual new Party most of the Leninist comrades will be chosen as leading comrades, and rightly so.

With this in mind, all I would add to my greetings message for the occasion of the Euro Congress and your press conference, underlying the urgent need for us to learn the lessons of defeat and reforge the Party is: "Go quickly Nina Temple and all your pseudo Marxists, the quicker the better, but you can't take the Communist Party with you, it's ours."

**Pete Jordan**  
Republican socialist POW, Long  
Lartin

## Daily

I am writing to congratulate the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB on its decision to relaunch the *Daily Worker*.

The reforing of the Communist Party and the publication of a its paper the *Daily Worker* are both essential if the British revolution is to succeed. Therefore the Party must not allow either of these crucial stages to be disrupted by the petty interference of pitiful relics from the centrist past.

The aging trade union hacks and disorientated ex-Soviet sycophants who control the *Morning Star* have nothing to do with communism any longer, and, as Steve Riley argues in *The Leninist* No111, have no right to object to the decision of the Communist Party to reclaim the name of its daily paper.

Comrade Riley mentions Mary Rosser's absurd claim that the PCC "doesn't really exist", so I would also like to comment on the legitimacy of the Party and its central organ, *The Leninist*. Anyone who feels uneasy about its 'unofficial' beginnings would do well to recall the history of our movement.

In 1916 *The Call* began as the unofficial weekly paper of the British Socialist Party, which was the main organisation that went on to form the CPGB. *The Call* stood in opposition to the official publication *Justice*, which was committed to social chauvinism. After the CPGB founding congress at the end of July 1920, *The Call* was transformed into the *Communist*, weekly paper of the new CPGB.

In *The Leninist*, our CPGB has its *The Call*. Now it needs its *Pravda*, in the form of the reclaimed *Daily Worker*.

**Zoe Ellwin**  
Herts

## SWP

As a member of the Communist Party 20 years ago, I was conditioned to

respond in one of the following ways when approached by supporters of the International Socialists, forerunners of today's Socialist Workers' Party: "Trotskyist!"; "ultra-leftist!"; "You are just a small sect; we have 28,000 members!"

Ironically, when I attempt to engage *Socialist Worker* sellers in discussion today, I find their response is a mirror image of how I used to respond to them - except that "Trotskyist!" has become "Stalinist!" and the membership figure flung at me is somewhat reduced!

It is, of course, no less opportunistic in 1991 than it was for us in 1971. Such unwillingness - or inability - to confront the arguments of political opponents is a sign of weakness, not of strength. And surely the SWP's biggest single theoretical weakness is its characterisation of the former socialist countries as "state capitalist".

When Tony Cliff addressed a recent SWP public meeting in Lewisham, he "proved" that the USSR could not have been socialist by pointing to the popular, virtually bloodless nature of the uprising which defeated the coup. He wheeled out quotations from leading Euros, just as the bourgeoisie does when it too wishes to demonstrate that "communism is dead".

The SWP's "state capitalist" theory ought perhaps to be viewed in the light of the August counterrevolution. If all we are seeing is a change in the form of an already capitalist regime, why on earth is the international bourgeoisie so elated, so overcome with triumphalism? Just a pretence to fool the workers, perhaps? In that case, extending the pretence to the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times* is going a bit too far, don't you think?

Incidentally, the public meeting mentioned above was scheduled to last a mere one and a half hours, and time for questions and public debate approximately 45 minutes. However, this time was eaten into by an address by the father of murdered black youth Rolan Adams, which lasted for a full 20 minutes. Consequently, the genuine (non-stage-managed) debate was practically nonexistent. Curtailing discussion in this way, no matter how worthy the cause, is symptomatic of the SWP's need to protect its supporters from having their theories put to the test of public criticism.

**Peter Manson**  
South London

## USSR

Reading my letter to *The Leninist* No111, I realise that there is an error in paragraph four in which I state that there is no difference in the role of the Soviet state today from what it was prior to Gorbachev. Obviously there is a difference; in fact it is a qualitative difference.

Prior to the rise of Gorbachev, the Soviet bureaucracy based itself upon the socialised economy. The resources and strength of the bureaucracy which controlled the Soviet state was derived from that economy, and to that extent the bureaucracy defended the socialised economy against imperialism. Today however, this dual role, of defence and erosion of the economy, has changed to a position of open and direct assaults upon the socialised economy, with the intention of transforming the Soviet Union into a capitalist system.

The qualitative change in the role of the Soviet state, and that of the bureaucracy, is but the result of years of development of the bureaucratic caste as a privileged and parasitic growth, and its accumulative deleterious effect upon the socialised economy. Having no independent role in history, which is peculiar only to the main classes in society, the capitalist and working class, the bureaucracy had to adopt the method of one of these classes to ensure a stable and secure economic base for itself; either socialism and self destruction or capitalism and a prolonged life, increased powers and

enhanced living standards by becoming the new capitalist class of the Soviet Union. The choice was a foregone conclusion and in harmony with the interests of the bureaucracy.

The Soviet state today has openly and consciously declared war upon the socialised economy, and it appeals to the world imperialists to assist it in its task of smashing the last remnants of potential working class power; the previous socialist content of the Soviet state, imparted to it by virtue of its role in defending the socialised economy, is no more; no longer can it be defined as a deformed or any other type of workers' state.

Although the socialised economy has not yet been transformed into capitalism, it does not automatically follow that the political superstructure reflects the economic base; on the contrary, the present unique historical experience proceeding in the Soviet Union shows that, so far as socialist systems are concerned, attempts can be made to revert back to capitalism through usurpation of the state machine, by pro-capitalist forces. Although this development can be ascribed to the peculiarities of the development of the Soviet Union, and the failure to extend the socialist revolution, it does make it incumbent upon communists to stress the necessity of democratic working class control within the proletarian dictatorship, rather than attack the concept of this dictatorship, which is the vogue in certain circles, thereby emasculating the theory of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism.

**Paul Conlon**  
South London

## Anti-fascist

Brick Lane in East London is the regular Sunday paper selling venue of the fascist British National Party and National Front. Around 300 anti-fascists turned out in Brick Lane on Sunday October 20 to mark the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, when Mosely and his fascist mob were forced off their march by the strength of half a million anti-fascist demonstrators, mobilised by the Communist Party.

This time Brick Lane saw the fascists mobilise early against the Anti-Fascist Action organised demonstration, which aimed to take over their paper sale. While Union Jacks were flying on one side, revolutionary banners were hoisted on the other, and both sides were prepared for a fight. But police barriers had been erected and police stood in between.

Chants such as "Cable Street" and "For the IRA, against the British Army" in particular agitated the fascists. But apart from slogans there was no physical confrontation and no arrests were made.

Led by BNP 'fuhrer' John Tyndall, the fascists moved off after a couple of hours. By the end of the demo it was obvious that the AFA demo's numbers far outweighed those of the enemy. AFA's campaign against racism and fascism continues on Sunday November 10 with a national demonstration against racist attack. Comrades and supporters should join the CPGB contingent behind the Provisional Central Committee banner at 1pm, Aldgate East tube, Whitechapel High Street, London E1.

**Nikki Reed**  
East London

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For reasons of political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

## WRITE OR RING

If you wish to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist*, please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX, or phone 071-431 3135.

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# An Open Letter to the miners



Which side was the Labour Party on?

**C**OMRADE miners, Kinnock's decision to exclude Ken Capstick, your union's nominee to fight the Hemsworth November 7 by-election, underlines the stranglehold the right now has over the Labour Party. We all know that the Kinnock-imposed stooge, ex-MEP and 'business consultant' Derek Enright, would have had to work hard to lose the seat - there was a 20,700 Labour majority at the last election. Hemsworth produced the largest Labour majority in many general elections, over 30,000 from 1950 to 1974. The joke used to be that Labour votes in Hemsworth were weighed, not counted.

Despite overwhelming support for Capstick by the Hemsworth constituency Labour Party, Hattersley and other Labour grandees claimed the right to "liberate" the seat from the NUM because it is led by "extremists". Others, again ignoring local wishes, claimed the right to impose their man because of the completely irrelevant fact that there are only 800 miners left and only one surviving pit, Frickley, in the constituency.

Ironically, the decline in mining stands as a monument to the uselessness of the Labour Party itself. That 10,000 miners have been made redundant in this area alone in recent years shows just how right Arthur Scargill was when he warned about Coal Board proposals for a 'slimmer and fitter' industry ... and just how right the miners were to resist.

Of course, the epic Great Strike of 1984-5 was defeated, stabbed in the back, not least by Kinnock and the Labour Party. Clearly, what this traitor is concerned with now is not making the Labour Party more 'representative'. No, obviously he is trying to bury the tradition and even memory of the Great Strike. Capstick played an honourable role in 1984-5 and today opposes the Labour leaders' determination to retain the anti-trade union laws used by the state in 1984-5 to legally rob the NUM of its funds and assets.

Here is another irony. The Labour Party was given birth by the TUC at the dawn of the century in order to fight the legal attacks on the unions from the bosses' courts, which culminated in the infamous Taff Vale judgement of 1901. Now, in the twilight of the century this same organisation promises to use Taff Vale-type legislation against the trade union movement.

However, in spite of what some

imagine, there has been no historic break. The Labour Party never has been and is not today a genuine 'working class party': something defined by a party's programme and leadership, both of which in the case of the Labour Party are thoroughly reactionary and pro-capitalist. Not surprisingly then, throughout its history the Labour Party has displayed a full and unequivocal commitment to the interests of British imperialism, no matter what attacks this entailed on the working class here or abroad.

So it is not a moment too soon for Scargill's announcement that he wants your union to "reconsider" its donations to the Labour Party. In his own words, while the NUM will continue to support its sponsored MPs "I cannot see the sense in donating £3 million to our Party when they don't even shortlist our candidate who had 84% of the votes at selection meeting." Quite right. It is a *crazy* situation where Britain's miners have donated something like £3 million to an organisation that in your hour of need refused to lift a finger and went on to participate in a lying smear campaign against your elected leader.

What possible use do miners or any other section of our class have for such a party, a party that assures the bosses that they will run capitalism better than the Tories ... given its history we can be sure that Labour will keep at least this promise.

Communists say that under these circumstances there can be no vote in the coming general election for those candidates standing on Kinnock's programme. What is needed is a party that will lead the fight against capitalism. The miners can play a great part in building this alternative.

As a first step the NUM should not just consider cutting off hard earned donations to the Labour Party. Workers at the threatened Dalzell steelworks in Strathclyde say they will field a candidate in the forthcoming Langbaugh by-election to further their fight for jobs. If this happens it will be a positive development and one which should be generalised. The miners should support candidates committed to a minimum programme of working class defence.

- Fight for what the working class needs, not what the system can afford!
- Smash the Tories' anti-trade union laws!
- A maximum 35 hour week for a minimum £250 basic wage!
- Fight unemployment! Organise the unemployed! Work or benefit at £250

minimum!

- Not a penny, not a person for the bosses' army! For Workers' Defence Corps!

- Troops out of Ireland now! Self determination for the Irish nation!

- Free abortion and contraception on demand! For 24 hour nursery and creche facilities! For the socialisation of housework!

This is the platform our four communist prospective candidates will be standing on in Glasgow Central, Rhondda, Brent East and Bethnal Green. It is how miners and the NUM should respond to Kinnock's attacks.

However, the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party urges miners to go further. We say that miners, all workers in this country, need a real workers' party, a fighting, mass party that can lead the working class in the struggle for self liberation.

To get that party it is necessary to begin by reorganising the Communist Party of Great Britain. When it was founded in July 1920 the Communist Party represented the *greatest organisational achievement* of our working class. It showed it in practice on countless occasions. But no occasion was more noteworthy nor memorable than 1926.

The Communist Party took the lead in fighting for and then leading the General Strike, stood with the miners for six bitter months after your betrayal by the TUC. Our ranks were decimated by a thousand arrests and then augmented by thousands of miners, won to the Communist Party because of its revolutionary fighting spirit and singleminded determination to overthrow the capitalist system of exploitation.

Naturally, although the objective situation cries out for reorganising the Communist Party there are those who, for their own factional or sectarian reasons, either call for an undefined "socialist alternative" to Kinnock, or worse, urge militants to keep their heads down in the Labour Party - no matter how much Kinnock discards democracy, praises capitalism and attacks the working class movement.

Miners have never shown sympathy for the politics of the halfway house, let alone the politics of surrender. Now is the time for the politics of class war, the politics of communism.

Yours fraternally,  
Provisional Central Committee  
Communist Party of Great Britain

## IN STRUGGLE

Jack Adams, member of the Euro organisation, is the new Deputy General Secretary of the TGWU, edging out the preferred candidate of the Labour Party leadership, Jack Dromey. Dromey was seen to break ranks by opposing Adams, the candidate of the Broad Left (of which Dromey is a member) and, thereby, of the TGWU 'machine'. Michael Howard, Employment Secretary, with characteristic moderation claimed the result would place a "red hand on the lever which controls the Labour Party ... This means that old-style communism, evicted even from the Kremlin ... will exercise a powerful voice at Walworth Road". However, this is obviously far from the truth. As The Independent on October 19 pointed out, "while Adams remains to all intents and purposes a socialist, he is by no means a wild-eyed revolutionary". It goes on to say that after the change in the name of the Euro 'Communist Party' to Democratic Left, Adams will be a member of little more than a political club. There is virtually no difference in the politics or outlook of Adams and Dromey. What has occurred has been a tussle within the bureaucracy, motivated by Kinnock's wish for no flies in the ointment before the general election. Both candidates share the same bureaucratic outlook. Adams' victory, while throwing a small spanner in Kinnock's propaganda machine, is no victory for the rank and file of the TGWU. *CA*

The inconclusive results of the October 20 general election in Turkey opens a period of political instability. This is good news for revolutionaries. After eight years of rule, Turgut Ozal/Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland Party has been rejected at the polls and Suleyman Demirel's True Path Party came out of the contest the victor, although with only 27% of the vote. Indeed, on the face of it, Turkish bourgeois politics has come full circle. Most of the politicians that the fascist coup of 1980

banished are back, as are the objective circumstances which meant that social life in Turkey throughout the 1970s was gripped by revolutionary crisis. The working class, as a result of eight years of Motherland Party free market 'reforms', is living close to the poverty level. Unsurprisingly therefore, American business experts in Turkey, surveying the 'successful' policies of the Motherland Party government which have explicitly favoured Turkish monopoly capital at the expense of the working class, have warned of "the danger of social explosion". The inconclusive results of the election, despite the fact that none of the parties were able to generate much enthusiasm from the voters, express working class yearning for a decent life and introduces an "ominous" element into Turkish bourgeois political life (*Financial Times*, October 18). Viewing this inconclusive election against the rising spiral of politicised class struggle, this authoritative bourgeois journal says that the working class in Turkey is once again "about to open a Pandora's box" of revolution. *MF*

In a break with tradition, this year's Manchester Martyrs commemoration march is being held on a Saturday, on November 23. Already the march looks like being bigger and better than previous years, with six flute bands promising support. The march is held each year in Manchester in memory of three Irish republicans executed by the British state in 1867, and in recent years it has become the North West's focus for solidarity with the Irish liberation struggle. The main themes of the march are 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self Determination for the Irish Nation', and this year's event will also commemorate the 10th anniversary of the hunger strike during which 10 republican prisoners died. Assemble Platt Fields, Rusholme, at 12.30pm. For more information contact Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee, PO Box 5, South West PDO, Manchester M15 5EZ. *VD*

## Keep rolling



So the Euros are finally about to complete the process of liquidation we first pointed to in the founding statement of *The Leninist* 10 years ago. And a good job too, we all say. At the same time we must bid farewell to that other obscene misnomer, *Marxism Today*, which will no longer grace rightwardly moving coffee tables. But the Communist Party was built on the sacrifices of class conscious workers who gave their all to provide their party with the tools it needed to make revolution. Most of this heritage has been squandered by the parasites of Cynthia Street, and the Democratic Left will continue this misappropriation. We have demanded the handing over of these assets to the only organisation pledged to reforge the Communist Party - the Provisional Central Committee - but we are not holding our breath. Instead we have to rely on donations from our readers to sustain our paper, so please help us to keep the press rolling. October was a lean month, £523 is not enough, though I must thank comrades AS, GG and NR for their contributions. *Vernon Douglas*, Fund Organiser



# The vanguard party in Ireland

## In search of a lead



Transforming the heroism of Ireland's freedom fighters into mass insurrection needs a Communist Party

A former editor of *The Irish Marxist* looks at the main constituents of the republican and socialist movements and highlights the need for a genuine Communist Party in Ireland

**S**OME ON the left in Britain involved in Irish solidarity work interpret 'self determination' to exclude the responsibility of proletarian internationalism. Conferring a legitimacy on the current demands of the vanguard simply because it is the vanguard, they question the right of communists in Britain to espouse different demands.

Such an interpretation of self determination deserts workers in Ireland and miseducates workers in Britain. It capitulates to a view of the Irish war which recognises only nations, a bourgeois war with bourgeois solutions. The content of national self determination is in fact the class struggle in Ireland. When 'the people' of Ireland determine their own destiny, they do so not as a homogeneous society but through the conflict of class forces.

### Centrality of the national question

Prior to 1969 the existence of the 1921 border was an issue which held most immediate interest for the then marginalised republican movement. This changed through the experience of the civil rights movement. Initially the perspective of the civil rights campaigners was not specifically nationalist. In fact the then newly formed Peoples Democracy (now Irish section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International) was to be seen marching under the Union Jack. As events unfolded however, the Six Counties, Lord Brookeborough's "Protestant state for a Protestant people", began fighting for its life.

As an independent state without Britain, economic life in the Six Counties would grind to a halt. Its loyalty to the British crown has been maintained only through patronage of the ruling class towards the protestant workers concentrated there. Despite civil rights and everything since, a catholic is still 2½ times more likely to be unemployed than a protestant.

The economy of the Six Counties is propped up by the British state, the only growth area is the security forces. The state apparatus is the largest employer and the vast majority of state employees are engaged in non-productive security work.

From its founding, the Twenty-six Counties economy was kept subordinate to that of British imperialism. Attempts at independent capitalist development by de Valera were wrecked by Britain; foreign investment since has paradoxically increased economic dependency alongside economic development.

The lesson "no civil rights without national rights" was learned by those who made the transition to the national liberation struggle.

The revolutionary content of left organisations in Ireland depends to a great extent upon their attitude towards partition and British imperialism. Without a correct position in relation to the central question, no amount of revolutionary posturing will make a blind bit of difference when it comes to overthrowing the state.

After the wars sparked off by the Easter Rising, the growing organisational unity between class and nation was broken. Republicanism reverted to anti-workerism and labour sold out on the national question.

Since this time two postulates have existed. The first says that the division of Ireland irreconcilably divides the working class, unity can only be achieved after national liberation; the class struggle is therefore suspended pending national liberation. The second states that the working class is the only progressive force in Ireland, national liberation can only be achieved on the basis of working class unity and is therefore subordinated to this task. To a greater or lesser degree, existing organisations conform to one or the other of these postulates, thus displaying only a mechanical understanding of the task.

### Republicanism

The history of the modern republican movement and its derivatives speaks of a revolution thwarted for centuries. Its origins in the 1798 revolt of the United Irishmen took its lead from the revolutions in France and America, expressing the highest ideals of the revolutionary bourgeoisie 200 years ago. By the time the opportunity for real success came round in the early part of the 20th century, however, history had transformed the bourgeoisie's role.

The mantle of revolutionary republicanism fell to the petty bourgeoisie. The small farmer, shopkeeper and artisan held true to the republican cause because

their economic interest could not be served by complicity with imperialism. In the modern age this class is caught between impoverishment by big capital or loss of identity within the working class. As a result it still seeks sanctuary in the freedoms of the 18th century today. The intermittent influence that left wing thought had upon the republican movement was not sustained, and always led back to the nationalist position.

Reconciling itself to the new social forces has been the problem of modern republicanism. This process had dominated the republicans during the 1960s when, after ending the ill fated border campaign of 1956-62, a break for reflection presented itself. The rise of the proletariat changed the class composition of its organisations while not necessarily changing its political outlook. When change finally did burst in on the republicans in 1969-70, in the form of the Official-Provisional split, it did so over different class interests in national liberation.

While the Provisionals maintained a narrow nationalist position, the Officials adopted a formal position for socialist revolution. Maintaining the Official IRA, they professed to "organise ... the working class, [and] lead them in a political and armed revolution" (*United Irishman*, paper of Official Sinn Féin, June 1971). Further, "The national struggle and the class struggle must go together" (*United Irishman*, November 1973).

But the revolutionary working class rhetoric did not last long. From Official Sinn Féin, to Sinn Féin The Workers' Party, to the Workers' Party, the leftward march was rapidly undermined by the growth of opportunism. Before long, under the slogan 'sectarianism kills workers', the Officials were blaming the Provisionals for the sectarian murder campaign of the UVF and repression by the British state. By 1975 they labelled the Provisionals "ultra nationalist and semi-fascist" and had abandoned their own armed operations against the British.

The revolutionary aspirations of some did not accord with the reformist plans of the majority of the leadership. This minority went on to form the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party had redefined national liberation as "peace amongst the divided working class in the two states so as to allow a united Irish working class to conduct democratic militant struggle for the creation of an industrial revolution in all Ireland and the overthrow of Anglo-American imperialism, and ultimately [sic!] the construction of an Irish Workers Republic" (Introduction to *The Irish Industrial Revolution* 1977).

But rather than the Officials degenerating into simply another layer of reformist politicians, the legacy of armed struggle did not prove easy to bury. The splits with the Provisionals and the IRSP gave rise to bloody feuds costing the lives of many republicans and socialists. Even though the Official IRA was supposed to have been stood down, it continued to carry out operations. And when opportunists get hold of guns it is almost inevitable that banditry and gangsterism emerges. The bank jobs and rackets multiplied, even spawning the practice of contract operations where hoods would be given back-up in return for a party cut.

Politically the concept of working class unity obsessed the Officials. To make headway on this agenda required talking to protestant workers. For any revolutionary organisation of the working class this would be a most essential ideological and programmatic function. But for the Officials it consisted of direct overtures to Loyalism and platitudes to bigotry.

Its rejection of revolutionary national liberation, its parliamentary cretinism, its racketeering and involvement with hoods, its now closely developed ties with Loyalism, its thoroughly bureaucratic scheming in the unions, all place it overtly and wholly on the side of British imperialism. Its current positions include support for multinational investment in Ireland, support for counterrevolution in the ex-socialist states, and running campaigns such as the 'Peace Train' and 'Families Against Intimidation and Terror' for the British intelligence services.

The revolutionary tendency within the Officials split in 1974 to form the IRSP. In the main, the point of disagreement was on the Officials winding down its involvement in the national liberation struggle. The IRSP programme was not Marxist-Leninist, although its founder and leader Seamus Costello wrote that the IRSP was "a revolutionary socialist party, prepared to give leadership on the street and in the elected chambers ... We stand for the unity of the anti-imperialist struggle and the class struggle" (quoted in *The Starry Plough/An Camcheachta* December 1987).

Initial mass defections from the Officials took place; the IRSP line was what many within the republican movement had been looking for. It not only attracted revolutionary socialists, but also militarists bored with the Official IRA ceasefire, individuals such as Bernadette McAlliskey and other political migrants.

To stem the tide of defections the Officials wanted to strangle the new organisation at birth, and thus started a liquidation campaign by the Official IRA which culminated in the assassination of Costello in 1977.

The IRSP survived, and the military component of the Republican Socialist Movement, the Irish National Liberation Army, continued its military confrontation with imperialism. Costello's legacy had left many healthy developments away from traditional nationalist republicanism. But negative traits remained: reliance on broad fronts rather than on party building, and the organisational supremacy of militarism above politics.

In 1984, after an influx of new members in the wake of the hunger strikes, the Ard Fheis formally adopted Marxism-Leninism as IRSP ideology. But there was much opposition to the move and the task of restructuring the party did not commence until 1986. The attempt to leave past practice and dead wood behind precipitated violent attacks upon the party by the dissident Irish People's Liberation Organisation (Iplo), which tried to wipe the rest of the organisation out.

The subsequent period has been spent by the remaining IRSP in attempting the transition to a Leninist type party. *The Starry Plough/An Camcheachta* was relaunched in December 1987 and has seen seven issues since. Unfortunately it has failed to break from its left nationalist past. Eclecticism and theoretical confusion which continued to represent the attempts of the IRSP did not in the end work themselves out (see reviews in previous issues of *The Leninist*). The IRSP has now not published anything for over a year.

It will be useful here to quote Ta Power, ideologue of the transformation, murdered by Iplo: "Those who would cling to the past, to the outworn, put forth the line that we will change but that it doesn't have to be so drastic etc. This is sheer pretence! They are usually agreed about what must be done - yet not doing it! That it can be done in stages - yet not following the logic of going to the heart of it and acting resolutely! They end up maintaining, supporting that which is the very problem."

The Iplo subtrend of republicanism we will mention only briefly. Iplo can never amount to anything. Despite its recent attempts to promote itself as a serious republican organisation, its apolitical character denies it any meaningful identity. Although it has acknowledged the feud it started against the IRSP as a 'mistake', it is still fully enthralled by a militarism of the worst wild west variety. It is fully capable, and has indeed carried out, acts of a cavalier and sectarian nature.

The next attempt to effect transformation from republicanism to communism was by the League of Communist Republicans which emerged as a trend within dissident IRA Volunteers in Long Kesh. From the outset its claim to hark back to the Republican Congress of 1934 was the basis of overcoming the fracturing of the national and social struggles.

The original Congress called for a democratic republic, and a broad front of all republicans, workers and small farmers to achieve this.

The modern day Congress corrected one error of the 1930s by declaring directly for 'workers and small farmers control', but was still fixated with the united front. The obvious difficulty of party building from inside the Kesh notwithstanding, the League did declare itself for building a Leninist party and must meet the criticism of having had the wrong approach.

The LCR believed that a mass movement under a broad front would "develop a changed political landscape" from which "will emerge a strong party of leadership"; "whoever propagates the correct line will succeed" (*Congress 86 No3*). It believed that the fundamental reason for the failure of the original Congress was that the time was not ripe, "bourgeois liberal democracy was far from having exhausted itself as a power" (*Ibid*).

On both counts the LCR failed to understand the nature and role of the Leninist party. Without the guidance of Leninist consciousness the broad front would slip into spontaneity, it would fail upon the rocks of opportunism, no vanguard workers' party would emerge. It requires an established Leninist vanguard to guide the revolution between the rocks.

From a wrong method, a method which is not Leninism nor scientific socialism, a Communist Party will not be forged. Before LCR publications ceased to appear it had reinterpreted the current armed struggle to deny it revolutionary content, and adopted a reformist political stance. Another failed attempt.

What is significant about both the LCR and IRSP attempts is that they came in the wake of the mass involvement of the hunger strikes. The masses, in their hundreds of thousands, surged into active political life. Mainstream republicanism was forced to take a left stance. The revolution was looking for communist answers under heightened conditions and



attempts were made to provide them. The IRSP failed because it could not break from left nationalism, whereas the LCR failed because it hung on to the broad front and was drawn towards 'official communism'. The common thread here is that Leninist parties are built from the top down. Once the leading point has been established it must be mercilessly driven home. There is no room for baggage or ultra-democracy, the target is a cadre force trained in the consistent application of Marxism-Leninism.

Let us now turn to mainstream republicanism in the form of the Provisionals. This organisation has itself gone through several political transformations, all however within the realm of bourgeois ideology. At the point of the Official-Provo split it was virulently anti-communist, having emerged from the section of republicanism which had not shared in the rethink of the 1960s.

By 1977, after the debacle of the 1975 ceasefire, the southern leadership of the Provisionals had become increasingly divorced from the realities of struggle in the Six Counties. The old brigade structure of the IRA was also becoming riddled with holes by the security forces. Restructuring began. Initially this was conducted in the military sphere alone.

The continued influx of members from the working class ghettos shifted the class composition of the Provisionals, encouraging a 'socialist' orientation to develop. In their own strategy "for establishing a socialist republic" (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, April 19 1980), they criticised established attitudes which held that the IRA could bring the Brits to the negotiating table, the unionists would accept a *fait accompli* and a constituent assembly would return a republican government. In revising this view, it was asserted that a mass political movement must be built and withdrawal forced under conditions favourable to Ireland. But still the mass movement was seen in a support role, and the task of building for mass *insurrection* was ignored.

Divisions in the organisation over this new direction spawned bureaucratic attempts to block it. But when these failed at the 1986 Ard Fheis the Republican Sinn Fein splinter walked out.

The federalist political platform of Sinn Fein, enshrined in its old *Eira Nua* programme, was allowed to lapse into obsolescence, and was not replaced until the *Scenario for Peace* document was included in the 1987 election manifesto. This was another step forward in the developing political line; clumsy federalism was ditched in favour of including the Ulster protestants in a unitary political solution. By proposing a constitutional conference upon British withdrawal, it recognised that the form of government would arise from struggle and cannot be dictated beforehand.

But ultimately *Scenario for Peace* fudges the issue by not stating the proposals which the republican movement would bring to such a conference. It correctly does not make withdrawal conditional upon an outcome from the conference but leaves events hanging in the air upon the foreseeable situation that "any significant group [should] boycott elections to the conference, or boycott the conference" (*AP/IRN*, June 4 1987). Sinn Fein recognises, but has no programme to deal with, the fact that British withdrawal is only the beginning of the fight for a new Irish state.

The republicans now have an armed struggle that has been joined by a developed political strategy. But today they face a condition of impasse: political as well as military deadlock. A plethora of measures to prevent the political growth of Sinn Fein have paid off. Censorship, repression, the normalisation policy and marginalisation have all contributed. A feeling of war weariness has developed among the nationalist communities and within the republican movement. Certainly the war could be continued, probably indefinitely, but it is not a winning strategy. A further impetus is required to bring a decisive conclusion.

For communists, the situation presents itself in the same terms as it has since the revolutionary situation developed in the late 1960s. But the republican movement is unable and unwilling to take this path. The republican leadership sees that eventually negotiations will have to ensue before a British withdrawal, so the task is to bring this to a head as soon as possible. If they cannot be bombed there, then they have to be politically manoeuvred. In this the armed struggle is a political bargaining point.

The Brooke talks were nothing new, only the continuation of the New Ireland Forum, Sunningdale and Hillsborough, but they came at a crucial time for the republican movement. Adams and McGuinness stated their readiness to talk without preconditions and Brooke replied that the British government would respond imaginatively. Of course the sticking point is the deal.

Sinn Fein has stated repeatedly that its conditions for a ceasefire are confinement to barracks and withdrawal within the life of one government. On the British side the government has demonstrated that it does not respect any Unionist veto, and has claimed to have no material interest in the occupation of the Six Counties. Of course this latter point is itself only a negotiating position, but the implication is that it may be prepared to withdraw if it does not lose anything into the bargain.

No deal has been struck, but more than political

posturing has taken place. Among the prisoners there has been a trend emerging of the opinion that a ceasefire would create a political opening, welcome from the point of view of Volunteers who have made innumerable sacrifices with no real end in sight. Notably, at the August commemoration of the introduction of internment and the hunger strikes, Adams made no tribute to the current IRA Volunteers: an omission from a major political speech which is unprecedented and could not have been by mistake.

Generally republican strategy is never clear in the making, but again the position indicated at the August West Belfast rally was revealing. In a warped reference to the collapse of East European socialism, the rally was held under the slogan "1990s decade of liberty". Apart from displaying a complete lack of comprehension of Eastern Europe, this pronounces a political target within the Irish context: a liberated Ireland by the year 2000. This cannot possibly be attained by continuing the moribund 'ballot box and armalite' strategy. Adams recognised this by excluding the IRA from his assessment of the future struggle and concentrating instead on the assembled crowd. The masses are the new strategy then, but they will not be elevated to a revolutionary position. The strategy is for mass protest and demonstration, not linked to mass armed insurrection.

The subordination of armed struggle to political objectives would be the correct communist position. But at this stage of the Irish war, armed struggle is the correct political tactic and should never in any case be subordinated to *reformist* politics.

Conditions, however, militate against the success of the new republican strategy. Conditions of a risen people under military occupation generates armed resistance, and its popular base in the oppressed urban and rural communities can be denied only by a moron.

As this article is mainly about the interaction of republicanism and communism, we will now turn to the reaction of Sinn Fein to the counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The orientation of the Provisionals towards bourgeois national forms rather than socialist forms is nothing new. On the collapse of the East European states *AP/IRN* offered a populist analysis of an anti-'Stalinist' character, seeming to parrot the less political Trotskyites. In January of 1990 "the restoration of capitalism is the least likely outcome", we were told (*AP/IRN*, January 11 1990); and at the following Ard Fheis before the Gulf War, that "all this augers well for world peace" (*AP/IRN*, February 8 1990).

This so common a failure to recognise the political realities of the conflict between imperialism and socialism is proven wrong on both points. By the time that the Gulf conflict was approaching maturity, some of the realities seem to have hit home. The collapse of socialism "has much to do with the Rambo tactics in the Gulf" (*AP/IRN*, September 9 1990), and "Eastern Europe and North Asia will become another Latin America" (*AP/IRN*, September 20 1990).

It is not that the analysts of Sinn Fein have not got their eyes open, only that they do not know what they are looking at. The nationalist perspective is proven deficient and unable to learn. The same mistake was repeated in August when Yelstin was characterised as champion of the "popular resistance" against the "old guard". When republicans find themselves echoing the thoughts of their own oppressors, they ought to think twice about what they are saying.

The last republican group we will deal with here is Republican Sinn Fein. Politically, this organisation still lives in 1798. It claims the honour of remaining true to the republican cause because it continues to abstain from partitionist assemblies. Its orientation towards socialism is only the anti-capitalism of the petty bourgeoisie. With its own - not very different, but more so - version of *Eire Nua*, it places a democratic social policy within the small producer economic framework.

Republican Sinn Fein has maintained its republican 'purity' by denying the reality of social change. The working class does not hold any place in RSF politics other than being, like small farmers, another layer of oppressed people. It even calls on employers to uphold the right to work. An entirely nationalistic outlook brings it to see the unity of the Celtic people as a fundamental alignment. In praise of Gorbachev it welcomes the break up of the Soviet Union as an act of national liberation.

Republican Sinn Fein was formed out of the elements within the Provisionals who just could not take any more modernisation. It has not sold out to social democracy or opportunism because it has not moved. Within modern republicanism it is a genuine anachronism. While speaking volumes on revolutionary goals, it is neither equipped, nor capable of equipping itself with revolutionary means.

### 'Official communism'

Communism in Ireland has had a chequered history on which we have already commented extensively (see especially Ireland Supplement III, *The Leninist*, December 1984). Through its many incarnations, and throughout the *volte face* of the Third International, it swung from one extreme to the other on the na-

tional/social questions, in the end resulting in organisational division across the border.

Practice and theory went hand in hand to the dogs, resulting in thoroughly opportunist and reformist parties in both the Six and Twenty-six Counties. Their common programme of peaceful democratic transition to socialism was singularly incapable of handling the outbreak of violence in 1969. The reformist whimpering of 'official communism', united in the CPI in 1970, led it to openly oppose the development of revolutionary struggle. The role it has played since has been reactionary and objectively pro-imperialist.

In many ways the CPI mirrors attitudes within the Communist Party of Britain; Labourism and the trade union bureaucracy dominate its perspective. It has the additional character of a strong protestant representation in the Six Counties - through the employed section of the working class - which has not been led to an orientation towards national liberation.

While its platform on nationalist repression includes calls for an end to repressive practices, the repeal of legislation and the disbanding of the UDR, it blames the IRA for bringing this down on the heads of the nationalist community. For its own part, the CPI espouses other forms of struggle - all peaceful, all law abiding, all unthreatening and entirely liberal.

From the early days of perestroika almost right up to the August coup, the CPI thought that Gorbachev was involved in communist renewal. The complacency of this organisation in the face of counterrevolution is genuinely staggering. It dawned on gensec Jimmy Stewart that something in the Soviet Union might just be amiss the week after it occurred to *Morning Star* editor Tony Chater.

Up until then all it could say was a load of vacuous old rubbish about peace, cooperation and disarmament, the unfreezing of the cold war, and what a nice democratic place the world will be to live in. Like the AA advert - Gorbachev was "a very nice man". And this organisation thinks it is a *Communist Party*!

This tired old bunch of 'communist' cretins have spent their whole lives giving Marx, Engels and Lenin a bad name. But what the hell, it is not going to be around much longer. The 'official' party is in ideological disarray without a clue how to cope with the collapse of socialism. It has been thrown into crisis and is being kept from organisational liquidation only by opting for operational paralysis. Its intention to hold its congress in 1990 did not materialise, further attempts in 1991 have so far failed equally miserably.

The CPI is on the verge of collapse, with a Euro trend developing in the Twenty-Six counties and the Six Counties following the CPB.

## Communist solidarity

Communists express unconditional support for revolutionary nationalists in Ireland. This is why we promote the slogan "for the IRA, against the British Army". We recognise the revolutionary content of the national liberation movement; we recognise most crucially that it is a movement which is directly challenging 'our own' bourgeoisie. But we are clear that the IRA is not sufficient a force to liberate Ireland. Moreover, it is not a force to liberate the working class. Full national liberation demands social revolution, and for this there must be a Leninist Party in Ireland.

Currently, as we have seen, no such Party exists, not even in embryonic form. The several attempts from within the republican tradition to make this transformation have failed. 'Official communism' is in deep crisis in Ireland, as elsewhere, and heading for liquidation. Looking to the Trotskyist left offers no alternative; those who have not completely succumbed to social democracy remain stubbornly confused as to the real nature of the national liberation struggle.

It is not simply that no existing organisation conforms to a supposed rigorous model of criteria, but more importantly, the direction in which organisations are moving is away from Leninist politics and increasingly towards opportunist or liquidationist forms.

Communists must, however, support the position which the Leninist Party in Ireland would take, even in its absence.

The duty of communists in Ireland is to lend unconditional but critical support to the revolutionary content of the national liberation movement, while promoting the organisation of the working class on an independent programme for its own liberation. Organisationally, this is not taking place.

To the extent that it is happening at all, it is among individuals, and under current conditions there is little hope that these efforts can be sustained. Isolation, and the vagaries of an individual political existence, are powerful destructive forces against communist consciousness. It is to be hoped that individual communists from the fallout of shattered politics make contact with a living communist force.

As we said at the beginning of this article, the fates of the working class in Ireland and Britain are inextricably bound, and bound up with the fate of communism worldwide. With the experience of international counterrevolution this can be seen clearer now than ever before. Communists must organise now to meet the coming challenge.

Mike Smith

# Calling 'time' again

THE RECENT 'Critical Eye' Programme carried the results of "the most comprehensive opinion poll ever published on British attitudes to Northern Ireland": 61% supported withdrawal of troops, 73% denied a constructive role for the troops. This is in line with the *Irish Times* poll in April of opinion in the Twenty-six Counties - 82% hoped for unification of Ireland.

The results of the poll have been used by Tony Benn in promoting the new Troops Out Movement campaign, 'War, Peace and Self Determination', and also his Constitution of Britain Bill which, along with disestablishment of the Church of England, abolition of the House of Lords and the monarchy, calls for disengagement from Ireland.

As always, the genuine will of the majority is brushed aside by the bourgeois parties. While massaged public opinion is a convenient cover for bourgeois dictatorship, it is not necessary for its existence. Even the so-called majority unionist wishes are expendable, thus we hear foolish statements by Sammy Wilson, Democratic Unionist Party leader of Belfast City Council, that "Conservative and Labour Parties are engaging in one form or another of republican propaganda, and this has probably influenced how people think" (*Irish News*, Belfast, October 25). Loyalism understands that British support for its interests is not inviolate, and will continue only as long as it suits.

But Loyalism also has its own agenda. If it cannot achieve full integration into Britain then it will attempt to force a unilateral declaration of independence. UDI is an economic non-starter, but it is the last refuge of the siege mentality of the UDA. Backed against a wall, the loyalist death squads are attempting to terrorise the nationalist communities into submission.

Since the end of the Brooke talks the loyalists have launched a horrendous assault. Indiscriminate mass terror has re-emerged on a scale not seen since the 70s. Up to two murders each day and the recurrence of attacks like those of the Shankill Butchers. Many in the nationalist communities are again scared to walk their own streets. Reaction is

reigning in Belfast, with nationalist militancy being the victim.

Yet this is only a taste of what is to come if British imperialism deserts its Loyalist henchmen. Even if a future withdrawal upon British terms was accompanied by selective internment to include Loyalists, this will be achieved through the terror and murder of nationalists. This can only be prevented by building the strengthened militancy of national liberation forces, not by constitutional compromise.

Despite overwhelming mass opinion in Britain and Ireland, Benn's Westminster Bill, like all attempts at 'constitutional settlements', will not achieve withdrawal of troops. Clearly, constitutional manoeuvres, no matter who the parties are, are under the control of British imperialism and cannot therefore lead to its abrogation. What is necessary is a clear defeat of British imperialism and not broad collusion in a new stabilisation programme.

While the Troops Out Movement denies the political content of the Irish war, workers must be clear on the political tasks which confront us in Britain and Ireland. TOM's 'War, Peace and Self Determination' is just a rerun of 1989's 'Time To Go', which TOM left, not over any principle, but because it was marginalised by mainstream Labourites. Now TOM has its own ball, and is trying to entice establishment figures out to play.

Hands Off Ireland! arose in 1989 to challenge the 'consensus' politics of such schemes, and in doing so, build a working class movement which takes a clear line for Britain's defeat in the Irish war. That remains HOI's perspective, and it will be active in raising anti-imperialist politics within these debates.

Conditions are worsening in the Six Counties and attempts to build Ireland into the new world order will only play into the hands of reaction. Real solidarity means transforming 61% support for troops out into 61% and more for Britain's defeat.

MS





■ *Dialectics and the British left - the saga continues. Is the Revolutionary Communist Party just about to split, or is it simply a matter of shoddy inconsistency? October's Living Marxism announces that, in the wake of the "establishment" party conferences, it is "certain" that Labour cannot win the next election. Yet The Next Step of October 25 - now a photocopied four page A4 newsheet edited by the (presumably demoted) Kenan Malik - tells us that an electoral victory for the Tories "is by no means certain". Either an RCP split is in the offing, or its leadership is betting on Lord Sutch for PM.*

■ *And on the RCP, one of our supporters who earns a crust working on the switch-board of a well-known London listings magazine (no names, no packdrill) received a call from a disgruntled punter wanting to cancel his sub to Living Marxism. Don't you just wish there's more you could do to help on such occasions?*

■ *From the RCP to 'Son of RCP' - the Irish Freedom Movement (Sorry, it's been a dull fortnight for 'leftwatchers'). The latest edition of Irish Freedom claimed 3,000 marchers on the August anti-internment demo. Rounded up from 1,500, of course. Seriously, though, when an organisation has to tell lies like this to justify its existence, it is time its members thought hard about where it is heading.*

■ *Rumours have reached our sensitive little ears that the SWP is intending to ditch its national committee in the name of "democracy" (like it did to its activist based branch committees recently) and depoliticise its paper Socialist Worker in the name of mass politics. How can this self proclaimed 'socialist Daily Mirror' get any more apolitical? A gardening page?*

■ *It has been pointed out to us that in No108 of our illustrious organ, right next to a piece in this column ripping the piss out of another journal's proofreading errors, we announced that founding CPGB member Rob Stewart "spent years in goal because of his resistance to World War I". Look out for the next issue, when all will be revealed on Joseph Stalin's period as centre forward for Cardiff.*

## OUR HISTORY

# Communist Party and the miners

## The formation of the CPGB and its early years: documents, resolutions and manifestos

**H**AVING taken a lead in the Hands off Russia movement, the CPGB threw itself into the struggle of Britain's miners. At the end of August 1920 the miners voted in favour of an all-out strike, their twin demands being a wage rise to restore purchasing power and a sizeable reduction in the price of domestic coal. The Party assessed the prospects in the lead article of *The Communist*, September 9 1920.

### Manifesto

Fellow workers - the Executive Committee of the Communist Party feel it incumbent upon themselves to advise you to watch with ever increasing vigilance the series of crises - industrial and political - through which we are now passing. Despite all the lying and deceit of the capitalist newspapers, the Council of Action, representing on this rare and refreshing occasion the underlying spirit and determination of the organised masses of the country hitherto unknown, have prevented yet another open attack upon Soviet Russia.

The declaration of the Miners' Federation for a general strike to commence on or after September 25 presents to us a first class industrial crisis which may have far reaching effects on the development of the organised labour movement. The transport workers and railway workers have shown unhesitating loyalty to, and solidarity with, their allies, the mineworkers. The Triple Alliance will now have an opportunity of showing whether the confidence reposed in it by organised labour in general has been justified.

We hope and urge that trade unionists employed in every section of industry will not be led away by the studied propaganda of abuse and misrepresentation employed to destroy the miners' worthy and commendable effort to determine the price of the commodity, for the production of which they are mainly, if not entirely, responsible. They who control supplies must inevitably control prices, and the mine workers undoubtedly can give or withhold the necessary supplies of coal...

We desire to warn the revolutionary trade unionists and communists against the possibility of intervention on the part of the government in this dispute, which will mean the abandonment in part, or in its entirety, of the miners' claim. Signs are visible on all hands that the master class have lined up with more solidarity than ever in order to prosecute the class war against the legitimate demands of the mineworkers in particular and of trade unionists in general...

Our duty, therefore, is clear in recommending to militant Trade Unionists that they cannot hope for any radical improvement in their economic status unless and until they have broken the power of the capitalist and landlord class, who live their vicious and indolent lives at the expense of the productive members of the community. Things are reaching a stage in which the workers must definitely assume control of their lives and conditions by controlling the factories and workshops, running industry and transport for themselves - the working class. The

majority of the working class despise the present government as well as all other capitalist governments.

The militants must be prepared, therefore, to take advantage of every industrial and political crisis in order to strengthen their position and to encourage and inspire their fellow wage workers with a desire for the definite and conclusive overthrow of bourgeois civilisation, based as it is upon unemployment, prostitution, and exploitation of the wage workers.

The Communist Party urges the toiling masses to prepare by every means in their power - through trade union branches, the existing Trades Councils, and the newly appointed Councils of Action - to assume responsibility for the control of the resources of the country which is rightfully theirs and for the administration of the means whereby they live.

Russia has shown us a magnificent example and has given to us an encouraging and inspiring lead that we must follow, if we are to break the bonds of capitalism which keep us in wage slavery and subjection. Italy and its splendid organised proletariat is on the threshold of momentous developments in this direction. Germany, Austria, disillusioned Poland, draw nearer to the establishment of Soviet Governments. There is no country in the world where the workers could so easily become the masters of their own destiny as in Great Britain, and we, therefore, appeal to our revolutionary comrades in every trade, in every occupation, in every industry, to be loyal, to be vigilant and unceasing in their efforts for the final overthrow of the capitalist regime. The workers alone can free the working class.

*The Communist*, September 9 1920

**But the miners were abandoned by the reformist leaders of the Triple Alliance transport and railway unions, who forced the Miners' Federation back into negotiations with the employers. There were no concessions on offer, just the now familiar trick of a productivity deal, referred to as the 'Datum Line'. Under the signatures of its chair and secretary, comrades Arthur MacManus and Albert Inkpin, the Party urged the miners to steel themselves for a bigger fight to come.**

### An open letter to the miners

Without strike or lockout, without the stoppage of a single wheel they [the miners - DH] have been out-manoeuvred, forced to retreat from a discussion of the terms they put forward, forced into discussion of the terms put forward by the owners...

The barrage sent up by the capitalist press in the last week of August and the first week of September made such a noise that few people realised how strong was the miners' position. They were really unassailable. All the curses of the kept press were as ineffective as the curses of these creatures usually are. The bad house of capitalism was shrieking because it was trembling. The miners' case was on a basis of rock...

They were basing their claim on the human needs of labour ... Every mem-

ber of the working class understood something of the miner's life and so was willing to back him in almost any claim for increased wages ... The workers knew that the cost of living had gone up by 30% since the miners' last increase and .... in spite of the newspaper barrage, the workers realised as clearly as could be that the reduction of 14s 2d in the price of coal was a move on their own behalf and against the coal-owners, the coal profiteers and Government; on that alone they were willing to back the miners in their strike .... the workers of the country knew full well that the Government had cheated the miners over the Sankey Report [the Sankey Commission recommendation to nationalise the coal industry was not implemented - DH] ... they knew that the Government would try to cheat both them and the miners once again. In a word, their whole attitude was sympathetic.

That was the strength of the miners' position four weeks ago ... The miners held the strategic position; they had only to hold tight; the press barrage would have exhausted itself, leaving them unharmed, and bit by bit the government would have been forced to discuss the one and indivisible demand, they would have bluffed, no doubt, but finally they were bound to yield to the miners. A situation with potentialities for Labour would have been created.

What has happened? The opportunity of mastery over events has been frittered away. Point after point has been given to the enemy. The strongest positions have been flung away. They dropped the 14s 2d - they dropped it for a sort of understanding that prices would not be raised at once. Then they found they could not get their 2s. The government had cheated them, and then began the alienation of the workers generally. The question of output was put forward. It was urged with all skill and advocacy by the Prime Minister, inspired by the owners who had been whispering in Downing Street from the very first. Presently the Federation yielded again - wisely this time, perhaps - for once they had abandoned the 14s 2d, they had thrown away their strongest position. The Conference postponed the strike. The Government and the owners proceeded once more to drive a hard bargain, knowing that the threat of a strike was now empty - at any rate, of a national strike backed by all the forces of the Federation. And last of all, driven from point to point, distrustful the Triple Alliance, without any feeling that they had a movement behind them, distrustful even their ability to call again the strike they had once postponed, the Miners' Conference in something like despair agreed to submit the owners proposal to a ballot vote of their members.

It is, it has been, a melancholy business. It is necessary for the rank and file colliers to note exactly what were the lessons as well as the fundamental causes which led to the debacle. We need not ponder over minor matters, thought there are obviously a number of things in which defective machinery, defective leadership, defective tactics went far to destroy the conduct of the campaign ....

The chief defect of the Triple Alliance goes more deep than these. It is the fact that the Triple Alliance is in the main run by reformist leaders. A Triple Alliance strike means a general strike,

and a general strike means perhaps a revolution! No one but a revolutionist will face the possibility of revolution.

No one but a revolutionist faced with the prospect of casting the country into a general strike will persist in a demand for 2s. or anything similarly small. Every strike leader feels his responsibility. But what nerves him to decide is revolutionary outlook; what unnerves him is a reformist outlook. So long as the Triple Alliance is not controlled by a revolutionary - or at any rate a militant rank and file - just so long will the leaders of it, when brought to the brink of the strike, shrink from the responsibility involved in a general stoppage.

And now that you have examined the causes of defeat, let us see what this 'datum line' means. This 'datum line' which has to be reached before wages are advanced is simply payment by results on a national scale. As capitalism develops, as the big boss becomes bigger and bigger, he meets the advance of trade unionism by new methods of super-production. 'Greater output' is now the formula by which the employer is going to sweat money out of his wage-slaves and coin their blood for profits...

Again, the Miners' Federation is the vanguard of British trade unionism, and a defeat of the vanguard affects the whole movement. Feeble though it may be from a communist standpoint, the class solidarity of the British workers is beginning. They are beginning to respond, they are emboldened by the victory of a section, and when a section loses they feel the shock of defeat. The miners' defeat will be felt through the whole movement...

What ought the miners to do? It is well to recognise defeat; it is well to face it clearly and admit it. But, that done, what is the next step?

Remember that so long as the owners have the power over production there will be no advance possible. Whatever you put before them, however strong your case may be, they will fool you and fool you again. The owners will fool you as long as they have control. That is why they made the government offer to have a general strike, an insurrection, anything sooner than allow the miners to control the price.

Therefore, the next movement in the mining industry must insist on control, control of prices, control of conditions, control by the workers.

A renewal of the struggle will take place soon. Of that there is no doubt. What is doubted is whether it will be unsuccessful like this one has been.

In order to win the next struggle, the following period must be spent in overhauling the machinery, of the Federation, of the districts, of each pit. At every election of a lodge secretary the candidate should be tested by their fitness in, and capacities for, a general strike.

Remember that the owners will fool you unless you get control.

Remember that reformist leaders will shrink back at the last minute.

Remember these things and choose men who, understanding that a strike may lead to revolution, will not on that account shrink back.

*The Communist*, October 7 1920

Compiled by Doug Hulme



# REVIEWS

## Rap

**Public Enemy, *Apocalypse '91 - The Enemy Strikes Back***

ONCE AGAIN, the world's most important group (think about it, who else is there?) are back on vinyl, proving that they have not split up and have no intention of doing so, despite what the rumour-mongering music press would have us believe.

After well over a decade, rap music is now more versatile and more popular than ever. Both *Apocalypse '91* and NWA's *Efil4Zaggin* shot straight to the top of the US LP charts immediately after release. Still virtually ignored by the likes of MTV and daytime radio, the intrusion of such hardcore music into the mainstream of Phil Collins/Bryan Adams land is not to be slighted. True, there is an element of shock value; outrageously violent and immoral lyrics sell (particularly in the case of NWA), although the record companies and especially the media remain reluctant.

With Public Enemy such novelties do not enter into it - the rap world reveres them as its number one focal point, always eager to hear what they are saying on their next album, always ready to catch on to their new directions in music. And they have, in Chuck D, the most competent and inimitable rapper around. He has an astonishing ability to communicate and take control, so that you know you are listening to a serious record with serious aims. Plus they do not need to sell out or compromise their music to achieve success; just listen to their 1990 LP, *Fear Of A Black Planet* - a totally relentless barrage of virtually experimental noise for the most part. The sound has changed, as always, not so much of an assault and more of a varied track-by-track LP.

Professor Griff, best known to us for his 'controversial' and stupid, though (of course) widely publicised off-record comments, has left the group - although it should be pointed out that, like new female recruit Sister Souljah, his contributions on previous records can be measured in seconds rather than minutes or songs. Chuck D is such a hardcore, engrossing rapper that you do not even notice the absence of swear words which most others use to drive their point across. The sleeve credits do, after all, begin with 'All Praise Due To Allah (God)', and good muslims must not be vulgar.

The rest of the credits go out to just about everyone in rap, from NWA through to MC Hammer. Looks a bit strange perhaps, but then you have to realise just how important rap music as a whole is to PE. Bickering and bitching feuds with other rappers is something alien to Chuck and Flav, they have a special job to get done - taking rap music to the top of the charts and into your home without selling out, and giving you something to think about. Even the LP cover, number one in the States with a picture of a skull wearing a US Army helmet. It may not sound all that extreme, but then what else has there been post-Gulf War, the Stones' 'High Wire'? Lame.

Even Flavor Flav, the funny one, is less silly on this album. That is not to say that it is a thoroughly dead-earnest record: it is still an entertaining danceable one throughout.

Objectively, of course, the big problem with PE is their ideological confusion. Sure, Chuck takes us on a trip through media lies and hypocrisy, white supremacists, liquor companies' targeting of black youth, the history of American slavery and its modern equivalent, etc. But what is it that links all these things? Is it capitalism? Or is it just closed mindedness? Can society be changed just by changing a few attitudes ... can the US state simply be persuaded to adopt different 'policies'?

When Chuck raps about closing down the big corporations if they do not put anything back into the community, I cannot help but worry that he is

not looking at why they do not give everyone nice jobs and a pleasant environment. Are we supposed to be muslims? It is hardly as if they push that aspect either. Okay, so Chuck D does not claim to be a politician, he is a musician who uses his medium to reach people like himself and open a few eyes to what is happening in the world and at home. After all, so much rap is full of muddled, Afrocentric, mystical nonsense that you feel like forgiving PE for not exactly being Marxist economists. The enormously popular but hardcore LA rapper Ice T seems to me to be the most sussed on that level (we are talking relatively here).

Musically though, there is no such confusion. Terminator X, the group's DJ, stays in control, managing to create the seasick, swaying feel of a packed slave-ship on the first single release, 'Can't Truss It', probably hovering in the UK charts right now - though with a censored video. Hardcore Rap crosses with Hardcore Metal as the lads collaborate with Anthrax to produce a kick ass re-make of their 'Bring Tha Noise' to wind up the LP.

Most inspiring of all (for me, at least) has to be the heavy, shit-hot 'By The Time I Get To Arizona', with its almost doom-laden funky riff; it has the crew heading off to Arizona, one of the two states to refuse a public holiday honouring Martin Luther King.

So there we are, another fine piece of plastic from the USA's best export. They might still be confused about the system they live under, but at least they know that it is not quite right. And when Chuck D starts rapping and commanding the attention of millions, it looks to me like he is changing a lot more young minds than some of the more ideologically sound but musically dull artists of the past. Let's just hope that they keep on going, and keep on learning.

Ray Holdsworth

## No, but...

**Eric Heffer, *Never a yes man*, Verso 1991, pp251, £16.95**

AS ONE reads through Eric Heffer's memoirs it becomes clear that here was a very confused person, muddling his way through politics with no consistent thread to bind together his theory and practice. This accounts for the mass of contradictions between his undoubtedly sincere desire for a more egalitarian society, which he labelled socialism, and his practice.

One example was his consistent condemnation of bureaucracy, centralisation and dictation to the masses from the top, and yet in practice he defended and supported the most undemocratic, centralised, dictatorial bureaucracy within the labour movement - the Labour Party and Labour governments.

All those who proclaim themselves to be socialists can offer a common ideal picture of what type of society they would wish; the criterion however is the policies to be pursued and fought for in the struggle to realise such a society. Left reformists such as Heffer, Benn and Co, who advocate policies that continue in practice to tie the masses to capitalism and thereby perpetuate the evils they condemn, are a greater menace to the struggle for socialism than the right wing who openly pursue anti-socialist aims.

The policies advocated by Heffer were unadulterated reformist solutions with a rich veneer of left double talk. On election to parliament in 1964 he recounts that in his maiden speech, "I attacked the Tories with gusto and urged our people to carry out socialist policies", such as calling upon the Labour government to "create new industries" in Merseyside as a means of solving the problem of high unemployment (p114). On the election manifesto of the Labour Party, he approvingly quotes its pledge for "A new Britain"

in which the Labour government would give the British capitalist economy "a new opportunity to equal and if possible, surpass the soaring progress of other western powers". All of this would be carried out "either by public enterprise or in partnership with private industry".

He admits: "Much of it was mere words, but it contained the concept of a national plan and, to us, [the Labour left] that meant democratic socialist planning" (p115). One could go on, quoting Heffer's reformist concepts of solving capitalism's crisis, all of which amount to the same thing: assisting in bolstering up the declining British capitalist economy, so that it may compete more effectively.

The difference, of course, between Heffer and other Labour leaders was that Heffer dressed up his calls for support for British capitalism and a more intense exploitation of the workers with phraseology such as it being a "democratic socialist plan" and the need for the workers to participate in carrying out such a plan - democracy from below!

His objection to Tory anti-trade union legislation in 1970 included the claim that it had hurt capitalism's ability to make greater profits. We read: "a lot of harm has been done to our image abroad, as well as to industrial relations at home. This in turn seriously affected our trade" (p137). The anti-trade union bill was injurious not only to the workers but also to the interest of capitalism, insofar as it "will not contribute to harmony in industry [and] industrial peace" (p138).

Heffer, as a good left reformist, records not only the parliamentary struggle against the bill, but declares: "The real struggle, however, was outside parliament" in mass meetings and demonstrations (p138). Democracy from below - but with qualifications.

Despite his advocacy of "strikes, demonstrations and extra-parliamentary activity," (p113) he never intended to present too much of a revolutionary attitude. "I had argued for many years for extra-parliamentary activity to supplement and underpin parliamentary action" (p179, my emphasis). In other words, democracy from below was secondary to parliamentary action and manipulated to bolster up the leaders at the top.

The history, purpose and role of left Labourites has been to provide a left shield to the traitorous pro-capitalist policies of the Labour right. Heffer quotes examples of how left wing activities have kept disgruntled workers loyal to Labour. Bevan's resignation over health charges, for instance, "kept thousands in the party" (p72), and an unemployed workers demonstration "helped mobilise the vote for Labour in 1964" (p96).

Talking to Tony Benn about the Wilson government, he admits with a heavy heart that: "This is a most reactionary government and I'm living a lie by giving it credibility. I would like to get out" (p156). So he did, but only to declare his continued loyalty and support for this "most reactionary government", so continuing to give it credibility.

Despite a parliamentary lifetime of agonising "on issue after issue" over "How could we stay true to socialist principles yet not bring the government down?" (p119); of feeling "guilty" about not opposing the notorious anti-working class Emergency Powers Act (p123); of disagreeing with reactionary policies "but remained quiet" about them (p201), Heffer could - despite Kinnoch's move to the right and his consideration that he "would move further" to the right - fetch himself to declare that we must "make certain we have a Labour government under the leadership of Neil Kinnoch and Roy Hattersley".

His reward? "My reward was a kick in the teeth" (p203)! Surely a better title for Heffer's book would have been, *The man who never learned from history*.

Paul Conlon

# ACTION

## Communist Party

'Under the Banner of October', Sunday November 10: anniversary rally to celebrate the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the launch of *The Leninist* in November 1981. Tickets £5 waged, £2 unwaged from Nick Clark, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.

**London Seminars:** 5pm Sundays. Details 071-431 3135.

The series of discussions directed towards shaping the CPGB Provisional Central Committee's Draft Programme is now in its concluding section dealing with the Communist Party itself. The topics are listed below. The second part of each seminar is a weekly discussion on current political developments. A new seminar series on fundamental questions of Marxism-Leninism will begin in January. Details later.

**November 17:** The CP: Men and women. No discrimination.

**November 24:** The CP: Legality and illegality.

**December 1:** The CP: Communists and trade unions.

**December 8:** The CP: Communists and religion.

**Communist Party streetwork** and campaigning in the four constituencies where we have adopted prospective parliamentary candidates: **Glasgow Central** (Tam Dean Burn)

**Rhondda** (Mark Fischer)

**Bethnal Green and Stepney** (Stan Kelsey)

**Brent East** (Anne Murphy)

Offers of help please to 071-431 3135

**Posters (A2) and stickers:** "Leninism Lives!" and "CPGB".

Ring 071-431 3135, or send donation with order to our box number.

**National demonstration against racist attacks,** Sunday November 10: Join the CPGB contingent 1pm, Aldgate East tube. March through East End.

## Unemployed Workers Charter

**UWC NATIONAL MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT**

London, February 1992

Send SAE for UWC petition and sponsorship letter.

**London organising meetings:** For details ring 071-431 3135.

**Unemployed Organiser** - 20p each plus 10p p&p. Send for details of bulk order rates).

## Communism Lives!

A series of four books from November Publications, by Jack Conrad, a member of the CPGB Provisional Central Committee.

**Which Road?:** A Marxist analysis of the reformist programmes of 'official communism' and Militant, laying the basis for a new communist programme. (pbk, pp280, £6.95 plus 10% postage)

**From October to August:** A comprehensive analysis of the social roots and dynamics of the Soviet counterrevolution. (pbk, pp200, £6.95 plus 10% postage)

**Class and Nation** (£5.95) and **Society of the Future** (£5.95) will follow in 1992. All four books for £22 postfree. Cheques to November Publications Ltd, BCM Box 928, London, WC1N 3XX.

**Press launch of CPGB general election campaign and of Communism Lives! book series:** Saturday November 23, 1.30pm, London. Ring 071-431 3135 for details.

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For more details see page two

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# Bangladesh solidarity

Over October 18-20 our Party took part in a conference organised by the Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian United Council. Below we give excerpts from the speech by Stan Kelsey, CPGB prospective parliamentary candidate for Bethnal Green and Stepney, to the 200 strong rally which followed

**I**N THE eyes of the British people, Bangladesh is a synonym for backwardness - poverty, hunger, disease and homelessness, as well as flood, tornado and every kind of natural disaster. And the British people are sympathetic, and charitable, and are moved to donate generously in a vain attempt to relieve the suffering of the Bangladeshi people.

But charity is the wrong answer, it can do little to alleviate the effects of flood and famine. Only in a socialist world can effective measures be taken to combat such natural disasters. Charity certainly cannot overcome the political persecution of ethnic and religious minorities. Only political struggle can do this.

Bangladesh today is a muslim state in which religious intolerance, discrimination and persecution is rampant. The state itself is encouraging the growth of muslim fundamentalism, and is upholding the 'justice' and 'righteousness' of blaming the problems of the people on members of the minority faiths - the Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, not to speak of atheists like myself.

Intimidation and humiliation is a

normal part of everyday life for the religious minorities. Setting fire to the houses of the 'infidels', murdering those of a different faith, terrorising people in order to drive them from their homes is commonplace. Then their property can be legally seized under the 'Enemy Properties Act' and leased to muslim fanatics.

The use of torture is widespread, both by unofficial fundamentalist forces and by the state itself. The kidnapping or abduction of young women from minority families for forcible marriage into fundamentalist families is another everyday horror.

Since the muslim state of Pakistan was formed in 1947 the proportion of minorities in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) has been reduced from 40% down to 14%! Today, in a population of 110 million, only 15 million are non-muslims, and an incredible 20 million refugees from Bangladesh live in neighbouring countries.

The systematic intimidation, humiliation and harassment of minorities in Bangladesh is indeed sickening. But equally sickening is the spectacle of the political leaders of the world's imperialist powers lecturing the rest of the

world about freedom and democracy, and about human rights.

The imperialist bourgeoisie which rules Great Britain - which until World War II boasted the biggest empire the world had ever seen, including the Indian sub-continent - has never played the role of spreading democracy around the world. The liberation movement in India, as in all the British colonies, was crushed in the most ruthless manner, just as the national liberation struggle of the Irish people today meets with the full force and terror of the British imperialist state.

This is not just a question of Tory governments. The Labour Party, which represents the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie within the working class movement itself, is equally guilty. In 1969, when the mass movement for civil rights in Ireland was violently suppressed, British troops were sent in and have carried out systematic harassment of the republican population of the Six Counties for the past 22 years. It was the Labour government of Harold Wilson which sent the British troops in. The Labour Party is an imperialist party. Those who consider themselves anti-imperialist must

become anti-Labour Party too.

The motto of the imperialist bourgeoisie remains 'divide and rule'. Just as the capitalist government of Bangladesh encourages inter-ethnic strife through religious fundamentalism, in Britain the imperialist government gives the green light to racism through racist immigration laws, pretending that black workers and Asian workers are the cause of unemployment and homelessness, not the capitalist system.

The Asian population of Bethnal Green face racist attacks every day. I am proud to report that this very morning members of the Communist Party were among the anti-fascists who assembled in Brick Lane to confront the fascist scum who sell their poisonous racist literature there, in the heart of the Bangladeshi community, every Sunday. The fascist scum must be driven off the streets of East London.

Communists say no to racist immigration laws. All restrictions on immigration into Britain must be lifted. No worker is illegal!

So long as the police have the power to search for illegal workers to send back to their country of origin, this intimidates all workers. In the sweat-

shops of the East End, illegal workers are placed at the mercy of their bosses. If they accept appalling working conditions, long working hours and low pay, then the boss loves them. If they complain, the boss simply informs the police, and the militant worker is deported.

We stand at the beginning of a period, albeit temporary, of extreme reaction, in which every kind of backward, anti-human idea will flourish. The religious intolerance and persecution in Bangladesh today, through muslim fundamentalism, is an example of what is in store.

We call on Bangladeshi workers in Britain to join with British workers in the noble task of reforging our Party, the Communist Party of Great Britain, to lead the working class in overthrowing the oldest imperialist power, by making the British socialist revolution. This is, at the same time, the best service we can give to the fight against the persecution of religious minorities in Bangladesh, and for the liberation of all the working people of Bangladesh and the world.

## 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Bangladesh

From October 5-9 the Communist Party of Bangladesh held its 5th Congress. We interviewed a leading member who recently visited London

**Historically how did the existence of the Soviet Union affect the popular struggle in Bangladesh?**

The Communist Party of Bangladesh, then the East Pakistan Communist Party, in alliance with the Awami League, proved its patriotism in the 1971 war of liberation, when Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan. The Pakistani military junta together with US imperialism wanted to destroy our political structure and our nationhood. The Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet government, together with India, took a lead in support of our war of independence.

However, the 'father of Bangladesh', president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was killed in the *coup d'etat* in 1975, and the anti-independence forces captured power. Our Party was again banned, and worked underground, but maintained all its links, and it took a special lead in forging unity among the nationalist, democratic and progressive political parties, just as it had done before the war of liberation.

For the 'third world' countries, including Bangladesh, in order to protect the spirit of nationalism and in order to forge the struggle of the toiling masses, the role of the Soviet government, Soviet party and the communist bloc of the world were vital. The changed situation in the communist world during the last couple of

years has had a direct influence on the CPB and on progressive politics within Bangladesh.

**What attitude did the party congress take to the August events in the Soviet Union?**

In the congress, there was a group supporting the policies pursued by Gorbachev, and a group which sticks to the exact commitment of Marxism-Leninism. And there is a third line, the view that the party must not change on any point from its earlier stand.

The group which upholds the view of Gorbachev and Yeltsin believes the party must be transformed into a 'modern' party.

**So the Gorbachev tendency in the Communist Party of Bangladesh is also the Yeltsin tendency?**

Yes, they are considered almost the same. Yeltsin wants a total change, and wanted to reject the CP. Gorbachev was heading towards the policy of Yeltsin, but gradually, with the forces available within the CP, according to that group in the Party.

A large number of our comrades consider that Gorbachev is the agent of the CIA. Another section believes that he tried to keep the Party manifesto through his perestroika and glasnost policy. He wanted to change the Soviet Union structurally and to bring democratic centralism within the party.

Like you in Britain, there is a sec-

tion which wants to change the name of our party from "communist" to, say, "Democratic Party", because of the defeat of communism in the Soviet Union and the East European countries. It is also believed that in a hostile country with about 80% muslim population, it is difficult to make good publicity of communism.

But the name of the party remained intact. Ultimately, through the freest discussions, unity was achieved. We shall examine the policies of the international communist movement and the issues in Bangladesh, and we shall pursue the policy of Marxism and Leninism. This is the outcome of the 5th congress.

**Your Party has been underground for most of the period since 1947. Nevertheless it has had mass influence. How has the Soviet crisis affected your Party's effectiveness?**

Whenever there is political alliance in our country for a big national movement, it is possible for the CPB to mobilise in a big volume the industrial workers and the toiling masses. In comparison to the larger nationalist and democratic parties, our Party has a very dynamic role in mass mobilisations. But the communist movement in the world has bifurcated now; it has split up into different beliefs, and the popularity of the CPB has to some extent at present minimised.

During Communist Party rule in different countries we observed that it did not work very democratically. Democratic centralism did not have fair play, therefore Party bureaucracy developed, and this made the Party inactive and detached from the people. Some people within the Party ruled the Party, and the whole country has been ruled by a few persons. So there has been dictatorial rule through Party bureaucracy. This must be removed, and now we have to think over, in a fresh manner, how we can get rid of this bureaucracy within the Party.

**But for the Soviet party it is too late?** Yes, and there is a similar position in other countries. But there is a ray of hope. In Poland Walesa came up and he is ruling. Perhaps he would give cream, butter, everything to the people? But he has failed.

A majority of our Party believe that without communism, humanity cannot be protected. Capitalism cannot afford full democracy. There cannot be democracy without communism, without a secular outlook. The basic needs of the people of the world for food, medicine, clothes, shelter, education cannot be solved except through communism. Therefore communist philosophy will survive.

**Can you tell me about your Party's programme for achieving socialism and communism?**

A draft programme was placed before the congress; it has been amended, and we hope very shortly that the final document will be out. The CPB wants to establish communism in Bangladesh, as its name indicates, but at the present moment it is not through armed struggle, it is through democratic process, and peacefully.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party came to power during the last election, and we shall see how this party rules the country. We believe it has got communal bias and it is a capitalist oriented party, and it will not be able to solve the national problems and the problems of workers and peasants. The CP has very wisely decided that all the national, patriotic and democratic progressive forces, together with the left political parties, must be taken into a new alliance, and this process of movement through alliance was started before the congress.

You know, in West Bengal, a state in India bordering Bangladesh, a Marxist government has been ruling for the last 10 years, and has forged a unity with the Communist Party of India and Forward Bloc, and other progressive political parties. We hope we can have some model from West Bengal in order to forge a unity within the progressive democratic and left political parties in our country also.